

With Mr. Goldwin Smith's Compliment
REFERENCE

THE LONDON TIMES ON CANADIAN ELECTIONS.

From the NEW YORK INDEPENDENT.

(REVISED.)

People in England think they have often reason to complain of the partial character of English news transmitted to the United States by the correspondents of the American press. They say the news is colored to suit an anti-British taste. But people on this side of the water, both in the United States and in Canada, have ground for reciprocal complaint. The erroneous as well as irritating and impolitic language of a large portion of the British press respecting the conduct of the American Government toward Chile must be held to prove that the facts have been colored in transmission to suit the supposed demands of British prejudice. Its Canadian intelligence the British press conservative derives from Ottawa, that is from the center of official Toryism or from correspondents who go to Ottawa for their information, and the intelligence is often highly partisan in its character and such as, if it is allowed to influence British policy, may produce dangerous misconception.

The Times had, the other day, (Jan. 2) a summary of the history of the British colonies for the past year, comprising an account of the last general election in Canada, to which future historians may, perhaps, resort, but which they will find utterly misleading. It is full of misstatement or fallacious insinuations. One paragraph is as follows:

"The day of the polling for the new Parliament was fixed for the 5th of March. There was barely a month for the electoral campaign. Both sides plunged into it without a moment's delay and the contest was waged at white heat from end to end. It was followed with extraordinary interest both at home and in the other colonies; for the wager of battle was no sooner thrown down than it became evident that the fight was to be fought on very different grounds from that of previous local contests. Within twenty-four hours of the dissolution Mr. Goldwin Smith sounded the first note of the new battle-cry. Speaking at a Liberal meeting at Toronto on the 3d of February, he says: 'The manifest political destiny of Canada is union with the United States: and any attempt to raise the barrier of loyalty against the natural destiny of the country is ridiculous.' He was not alone in taking up this position.

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Other prominent members of the political party were shown to have entertained similar views, and to have labored not only at home but in Washington to give effect to them. They form but a small section of the party; but they fixed a stigma upon it at the same time that they opened the eyes of the world to the inevitable end of the policy of which they were the ardent advocates. The election was fought on the issue of loyalty to the British connection, and the great mass of the Liberal electorate had to cast its votes under the disadvantage of an annexation cry, with which it had as little real sympathy as its opponents. As a weapon of electoral attack Sir John Macdonald could have desired nothing more effective than the discovery of the so-called Wiman conspiracy, by which it was shown that men holding the position of leaders of public opinion in Canada had made themselves vehicles of advice given to the Government of Washington to refuse to grant the advantages desired by the Dominion in order that she might be forced to accept the alternative of an annexation."

I addressed no public meeting at all, nor did I take any active part in the election, though I avowed my hearty sympathy with those who were fighting against monopoly and corruption. I have never belonged to either of the party organizations. The near coincidence of the first of three lectures delivered by me to the Young Men's Liberal Club with the dissolution of Parliament was accidental, no notice of the dissolution having been given at the time when the lecture was arranged. The writer knows the truth, and he disguises it for the obvious purpose of connecting the cause of the Liberal party with what he imagines to be my unpopular opinions. No battle-cry was raised by the Liberal party or by any section of it except those of free trade with the United States and opposition to government by corruption. What could have compelled or induced the party and its leaders to allow a battle-cry with which they had no real sympathy to be imposed on them by a small section or as the *Times* in another paragraph puts it by "a few fanatics?" The words given as a quotation from me are not mine, nor do they fairly represent what I said. But the sting of the paragraph lies in its calumnious assumption of the reality of "the Wiman plot;" an alleged conspiracy, as the writer proceeds to explain, between Liberal leaders in Canada and American statesmen, for the purpose of forcing Canada into the Union by the denial of commercial advantages. That plot had no more real existence than the plot which made the fortune of Titus Oates, whom its inventors rivaled in veracity. *The Times* may

well say that the plot served Sir John Macdonald's electioneering purposes well. It was with that object that it was invented.

Sir John Macdonald's real reason for suddenly dissolving Parliament without a shadow of constitutional ground, and on an imperfect register is now apparent. He knew that the revelations of his system of corruption were coming, and he wanted to snatch a fresh lease of power before they came. Perhaps he also wished to forestall the growth of opinion in favor of closer trade relations with the United States. His plea at first was the necessity of a popular mandate to enable him to proceed with negotiations which he intimated were on foot with the American Government. This plea was quashed by Mr. Blaine's letter, positively denying that any negotiations were on foot. The issue was then shifted to British *versus* American connection, and to excite the loyalty of the country and its feeling against the United States, the Wiman plot was fabricated. The materials were obtained in a way characteristic of Sir John Macdonald's lofty statesmanship. An American brochure, on the policy of the United States toward Canada, was being printed at Toronto for the benefit of revision with regard to names and figures by a Canadian journalist who had been on the American press and was connected with the writer. No one except the writer and reviser had ever seen or heard of the paper or knew anything about the matter. The proof was stolen from a printing office by a spy in the interest of Sir John Macdonald, and was used by Sir John Macdonald as proof of a conspiracy of the Liberal leaders with the American Government to force Canada into the Union. To connect my name with the plot Sir John Macdonald's personal organ printed an alleged set of instructions from me to the printer, directing that a pamphlet of my own should be set up uniform with the treasonable American paper. The instructions were a forgery, risked no doubt in the belief that the real instructions would have been thrown away. Thrown away they had been, but they were luckily recovered. They directed that my pamphlet should be set up uniform with a previous pamphlet of my own. Thus the forgery was exposed. To bolster up the fabrication, Sir Charles Tupper produced two stolen letters, the use of which did not seem to him inconsistent with his position as a member of an order of chivalry. One of these was from Mr. Edward Farrer, a writer on the *Toronto Globe*, to Mr. Wiman, saying that he (Mr. Farrer) preferred a movement in favor of political to one in favor of commercial union. The other was from Representative Hitt, to whom Mr. Wiman handed Mr. Farrer's letter, saying that he did not agree with Mr. Farrer's opinion. The

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letters not only had no tendency to prove conspiracy, but they disproved the existence even of concert. I repeat that the Wiman plot was a sheer fiction got up for an electioneering purpose by Sir John Macdonald, Sir Charles Tupper, and the organists of their reptile press. It indicates nothing but the character and habits of the men on whose victory, gained by these means and by wholesale bribery, Lord Salisbury, breaking through the established impartiality of the Imperial Government, telegraphed his congratulations.

The last sentence of the paragraph charges certain persons unnamed with conduct which would be actually criminal. If I am included in the imputation I give it the most indignant and emphatic denial.

Instead of intriguing against the grant of commercial privileges to Canada with a view of forcing her into the Union, we Canadian Liberals have been and are doing our best to obtain for her the privileges of reciprocal trade with the United States.

There are other erroneous statements in the *Times* article and all of them on the same side. It is not the fact that Sir John Macdonald swept the field. His majority was reduced by one-half and his losses were in the great political Provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Nor is it a fact that, as the *Times* would lead its readers to believe, Mr. Edward Blake retired from the Liberal leadership and from public life because he feared that the tendency of the Liberal policy was disloyal. His retirement was caused by the failure of his health and he had refused to vote with the bulk of the party for Mr. Mulock's "loyalty" resolution.

Canadian Liberals are ceasing to look for justice to England or to the British press. That we have been and are struggling against a system of government by corruption, ruinous to the character to our people is nothing. The system keeps the colony in the state of dutiful dependence. That seems to be enough. We are sometimes reminded of the language held by British Tories about "our colonists" on the eve of the American Revolution. Canadian Liberals are being forced to identify themselves with their own continent; a result to me not unwelcome though I could wish to see it brought about by happier means and without diminution of that filial feeling toward the Mother Country which is strong in my own heart and is perfectly compatible with a belief in the necessity of autonomy for the New World.

GOLDWIN SMITH.

February 15, 1892.